

involve

Strategic Plan

2008 - 2011

improve

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City of Rochester Fire Department

October, 2008

A Message from Chief Caufield

September, 2008



On behalf of the men and women of the Rochester Fire Department, I am pleased to present the Department's first-ever Strategic Plan. This Plan was developed through the devoted efforts of a representative group of Department members from all ranks and assignments. The Strategic Planning Team members volunteered their time and energy in an effort to shape the future endeavors of the Rochester Fire Department, and to provide a framework that will lead to continuous improvements. Their dedication and devotion to this project must be recognized and commended.

The driving force behind developing the Plan was a change in the senior leadership of the Department; planning for the process began in the Fall of 2007. Fully understanding that this Plan was the first step of many in the Department's journey toward continued excellence, the Development Team chose to focus on readily achievable goals in a fiscally challenging environment.

The planning team's focus was to determine strategic goals which could be accomplished within the next three years. While the Department may not fully achieve all the stated objectives within a three year window, we believe that it is important to design a framework which will guide the department utilizing these strategic goals.

During the approximately six month process, the Strategic Planning Team identified the following five strategic goals for the Rochester Fire Department:

- Improve the operation of our organization
- Improve the people in the organization
- Improve organizational communication
- Refine community outreach efforts
- Improve the efficient management and allocation of department resources

In closing, I must thank the members of the Strategic Planning Team and the Strategic Planning facilitator, Dr. Matt Jones, Assistant Professor in the Masters of Public Administration Program at SUNY Brockport. The enthusiasm and commitment exhibited by this group of pioneers has resulted in a document which will guide the future of the Rochester Fire Department. On behalf of the men and women of the Rochester Fire Department I accept this document and the challenge of nurturing these strategic goals into reality.

John D. Caufield, Fire Chief
Rochester Fire Department

Vision

To be leaders in the delivery of fire and rescue services, and provide the safest environment for our personnel and the people we serve.



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The Strategic Plan

Strategic Planning Committee Members

Sam Mitrano, Executive Deputy Chief
 Darryl Winter, Battalion Chief
 Mark Strzyzynski, Battalion Chief
 Patrick Agostinelli, Captain
 Bill Holtz, Captain
 David Kaltenbach, Captain
 Mark Stoianovich, Lieutenant
 Tom Szatko, Lieutenant
 John Whitley, Lieutenant
 Felipe Hernandez Jr., Fire Fighter
 Willie Lightfoot, Fire Fighter
 Ed Tracey, Fire Fighter
 Lisa-Beth White, Fire Fighter

Introduction

This is the first strategic plan in the Rochester Fire Department's 150-year history. The document will act as both a template and tool that provides strategic direction to the department. In visioning for the future, strategic planning models frequently focus upon setting goals and strategic direction over a five-year period. This plan slightly deviates from this traditional model by setting goals over a three-year period. The goal of engaging in the strategic planning process is to produce a living, breathing document that assists with resource allocation, decision-making, direction, and prioritization of strategies. The planning committee therefore drafted goals that it not only viewed as high priority, but those that could be attained over the next three years.



Process and Background

The impetus for the creation of a department strategic plan came from Chief John Caufield. The Chief recruited a strategic planning facilitator and selected department members to serve on the planning committee. The members of the planning committee represented a cross-section of the organization with all rank levels present.

The planning committee gathered at several meetings in which they worked on identifying the department's mission, values, and vision. The committee subsequently drafted a revised organizational mission statement, set of core values, and revised vision statement. The committee members also engaged in an assessment of the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. In doing this, the committee members felt it vital to survey all the members of department by disseminating a survey within the organization requesting feedback on these items. The planning committee wanted to give the

members of the department optimal opportunity to voice their opinions and judgments. The survey therefore consisted of open-ended questions soliciting a response on what the departmental members viewed as the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the department (see Appendix A).

The planning committee received 107 completed surveys, which approximately represents a twenty



percent return rate. The committee met once again so that each member could individually review the responses from the survey. Based upon the feedback from the surveys, the planning committee synthesized the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges that the department faces. It should also be noted that several planning committee members actively engaged in soliciting personal feedback from members within the organization, which greatly assisted in the process.

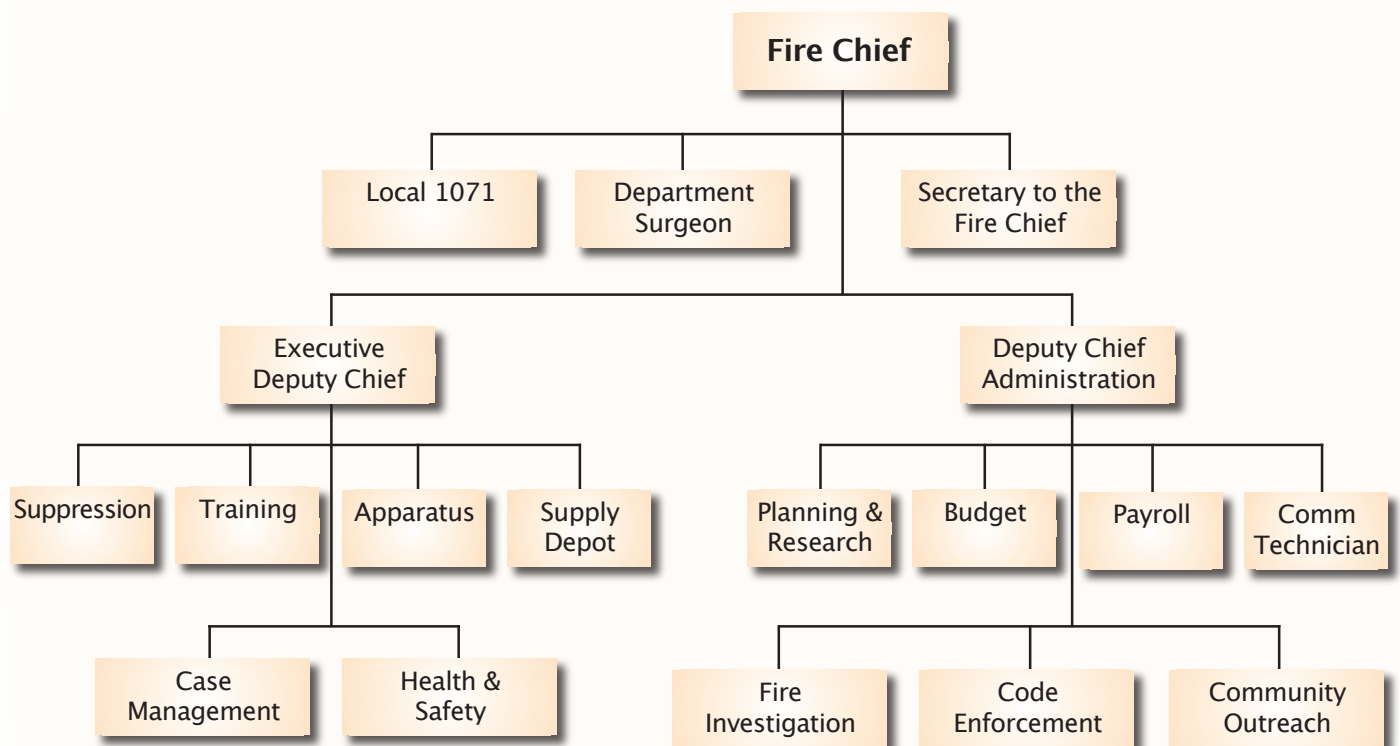
Based upon the assessment of the department, the planning committee drafted five strategic goals and several related objectives to carry out the goals. These goals will serve as a guide to the department so that it may achieve its vision. The five strategic goals are:

- 1. Improve the operation of the organization**
- 2. Improve the people within the organization**
- 3. Improve organizational communication**
- 4. Refine Community outreach efforts**
- 5. Improve the efficient management and allocation of department resources**

Organizational Background

The City of Rochester Fire Department provides emergency services to a population of 204,963 residing in an area of 36 square miles. These services are provided from 15 fire stations located within the jurisdiction. The Rochester Fire Department has 541 employees that assist in carrying out the organization's mission. The department consists of 388 firefighters, 127 officers, and 26 civilian members.

RFD Organizational Structure



Mission Statement

The City of Rochester Fire Department provides professional services for life preservation, incident stabilization, and property conservation. We protect life and property through fire suppression, emergency medical services, technical rescue, fire prevention, disaster preparedness, and public education. The effective delivery of these services is achieved through a commitment to our employees and the community.

Core Values



Vision Statement

To be leaders in the delivery of fire and rescue services, and provide the safest environment for our personnel and the people we serve.

Diversity Statement

The City of Rochester Fire Department is committed to achieving service excellence through diversity and inclusion. We strive to establish a climate that respects differences, encourages innovation and welcomes contributions from all members of our workforce.

Strategic Assessment

Strengths

An organization must identify its strengths so that it can assess what it is doing correctly and how to capitalize on that to provide better service delivery. Through the strategic planning committee and organizational survey, the following strengths were identified:

1. Line division/working relationships
2. Positive perception within the community/ image

Weaknesses

The performance of an organization depends upon identifying and rectifying its weaknesses. For an organization to continue to focus on continuous improvement, it is vital to diagnose what is not working well and strategize on methods to improve the deficiencies. Through the strategic planning committee and organizational survey, the following weaknesses were identified:

1. The hiring/firing process
 - 1.1. unsatisfactory standards
 - 1.2. maintaining firm standards
 - 1.3. promotion process/retention
2. Lack of training (including professional development)
3. Budget constraints
4. Lack of communication within the organization
5. Micromanagement/lack of empowerment
6. Low morale
7. Lack of a research and planning division

Opportunities

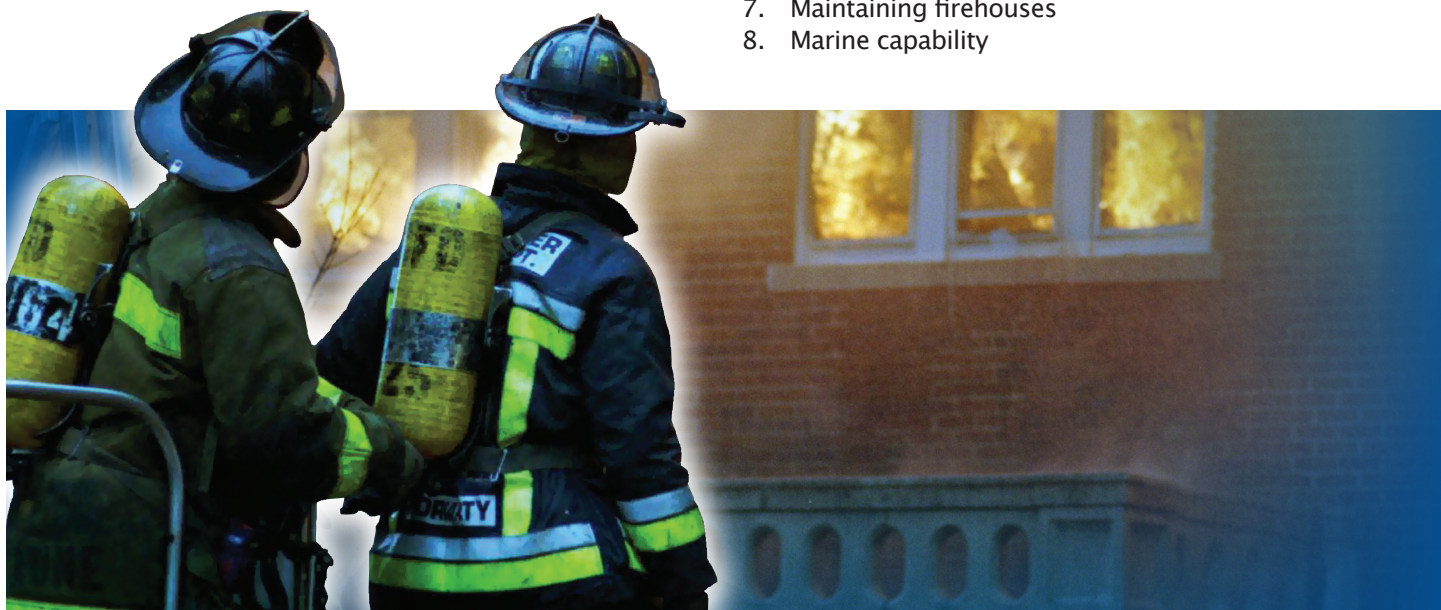
The identification of opportunities assists a department in looking to the future to expand and develop new services. Through the strategic planning committee and organizational survey, the following opportunities were identified:

1. Capitalize on positive community perception
2. Grant writers/explore revenue sources
3. Consolidation of services
4. Shared cooperative services
5. Marketing specialty units
6. EMS services
7. Breaking into the training business (revenue enhancement)
8. Waterfront development
9. External sponsorship opportunities (funding)
10. USAR

Challenges

Through the recognition of potential challenges, an organization is able to plan for the future and address areas of uncertainty. Through the strategic planning committee and organizational survey, the following challenges facing the Rochester Fire Department were identified:

1. SOGs (need updating)
2. Administrative policies and procedures
3. Recruitment/diversity
4. Communication (inter-organizational)
5. Technology (communication related as well)
6. Meeting minimum training standards (backfill for overtime)
7. Maintaining firehouses
8. Marine capability



Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goal 1: Improve the operation of the organization

The Rochester Fire Department recognizes that improving the operation of the organization ultimately leads to better service delivery for the community we serve. Consistent with our core values of teamwork and excellence we have developed the following objectives to improve how our organization operates.

Objective 1: Involve our employees in the administrative process of the organization

Timeline: 6 months

Related Tasks:

- Create committees that empower employees to draft and/or review organizational policies and guidelines.
- Create committees to review and make recommendations on apparatus purchase, clothing purchase, and other related operational purchases.
- Establish a strategic planning advisory committee that ensures decisions and actions of the Rochester Fire Department follow the strategic plan and department mission, values, and vision.



Objective 2: Improve organizational standardization

Timeline: 2 years

Related Tasks:

- Review current standard operating procedures and amend appropriately in areas that are vague or out of date.
- Review current administrative policies and procedures and amend appropriately in areas that are vague or out of date.
- Develop a tactical playbook for department operations.



Strategic Goal 2: Improve the people within the organization

The success of any organization ultimately hinges upon the success and development of the employees within it. The Rochester Fire Department recognizes this and in keeping with our core values of professionalism, excellence, and education, we have developed the following objectives to assist with the development of the people within our organization.

Objective 1: Improve our approach to the promotional process

Timeline: 1 year

Related Tasks:

- Create a department specific officer-training program for each officer level.
- Review the adequacy of the current promotional process.
- Develop a list of department supported courses and programs for individuals seeking promotion.

Objective 2: Develop a coaching program to target members who are probationary Firefighters, recently promoted and for any member who may act out of title.

Timeline: 1 year

Related Tasks:

- Create a committee to develop and implement the program.

Objective 3: Establish mechanisms for continuous professional development of our employees.

Timeline: 3 years

Related Tasks:

- Develop mechanism to ensure each specialty team member receives certification within his or her career track.
- Task each group with developing a detailed training scenario every four years that is rotated onto other groups.
- Develop a central library that training books, electronic resources, and adequate study and research space that employees can utilize.
- Identify and disseminate training for department members.
- Establish a master training schedule that allows each member to have access to and plan for future training.
- Establish unit training qualifications and requirements as well as timelines by which they should be met.



Objective 4: Improve recruit training

Timeline: 3 months

Related Tasks:

- Enforce the minimum performance expectations required of line firefighters during recruit training.
- Maximize available external resources to assist in recruit training.

Objective 5: Improve recruitment

Timeline: 18 months

Related Tasks:

- Investigate holding the entrance exam every two versus four years.
- Investigate recruitment effort partnerships with the Rochester Police Department or City Human Resources Office.
- Reevaluate, develop, document, and enforce standards in the Rochester Firefighter Training Program.
- Determine best practices in reaching high quality candidates who are reflective of the community.

Objective 6: Improve the delivery of training

Timeline: 3 years

Critical Tasks:

- Provide adequate staffing and resources for developing and presenting training material to personnel.
- Improve and enhance training facilities – Class A burn buildings, specialty simulators, etc.
- Facilitate the ability for personnel to receive training and education by utilizing release time and other available means.
- Investigate the feasibility of implementing a local rescue school.
- Provide formal in-house local training.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goal 3: Improve organizational communications

The Rochester Fire Department recognizes that communication is a key factor in efficient and effective service delivery. A well-informed organization is one that not only has high morale, but also an organization able to function at higher capacity. In recognizing this, we also acknowledge that to be a high functioning organization, fluid and coherent communication must exist between RFD and the external organizations we work along side. In keeping with our core values of professionalism, excellence, and teamwork, we have developed the following objectives.

Objective 1: Develop clear procedures for communicating within the organization.

Timeline: 6 months

Critical Tasks:

- Establish department newsletter
 - Disseminate information from the Fire Chief to the organization;
 - Recognize employee contributions;
 - Assist in relaying departmental information across the entire organization; and,
 - Assist in maintaining high morale by keeping personnel well informed.
- Research the feasibility and utility of purchasing mobile data terminals for apparatus.
- Streamline internal communication mechanisms.
- Using e-mail to send directives, IDC, and so forth.

Objective 2: Develop clear procedures for communicating with other organizations.

Timeline: 2 years

Critical Tasks:

- Develop and maintain working relationships with Neighborhood Service Centers (formerly known as NET), RPD, and other support agencies.
- Assist in fostering agency interoperability by developing protocols whereby information is disseminated during tactical communications.

Strategic Goal 4: Refine community outreach efforts

The Rochester Fire Department recognizes that it is a community service oriented organization. In keeping with our core values of excellence, professionalism, and education, we seek to refine and improve how we interact with those we serve.

Objective 1: Disseminate relevant department information to the community.

Timeline: 1 year

Critical Tasks:

- Improve the RFD website.
- Reinstitute the position of Public Information Officer.
- Identify and utilize community newspapers and websites.

Objective 2: Interact with the community to refine service delivery.

Timeline: 2 years

Critical Tasks:

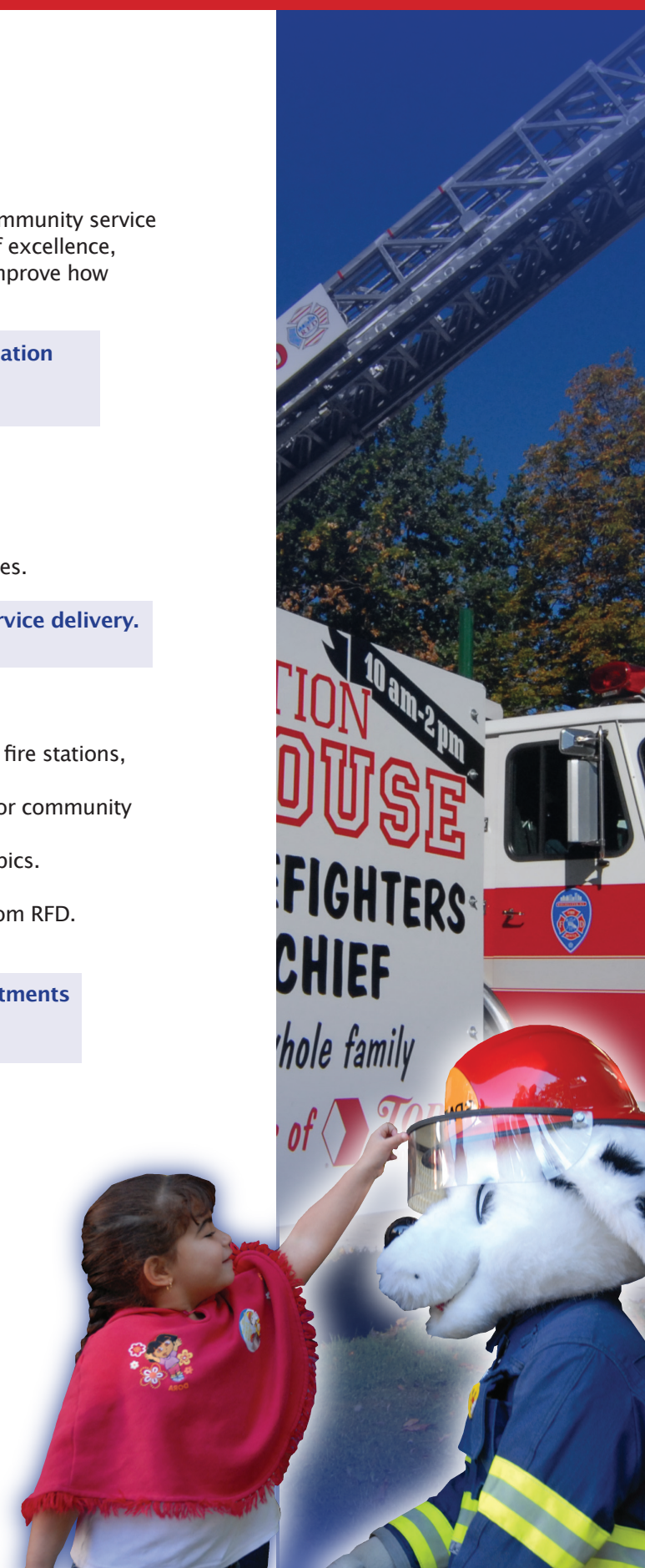
- Publish a list of community meetings and distribute to fire stations, encouraging line company participation.
- Institute written programs that outline talking points for community meetings, school programs, and so forth.
- Create public access programs biannually on safety topics.
- Increase public safety announcements.
- Survey the community to ascertain what they desire from RFD.

Objective 3: Interact with other fire and rescue departments in the community.

Timeline: 1 year

Critical Tasks:

- Investigate the feasibility of increasing and assisting specialty response to jurisdictions in the greater Rochester area that lack the appropriate resources and training.



Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goal 5: Improve the efficient management and allocation of department resources

As an innovative organization, the Rochester Fire Department is dedicated to continuous improvement. Consistent with our core value of excellence, we have developed the following objectives to improve how we manage and allocate the resources of our department.

Objective 1: Develop and improve department planning and infrastructure

Timeline: 3 years

Critical Tasks:

- Restore dedicated planning and research resources.
- Institute appropriate project management techniques to see projects through to completion.
- Improve our marine response capabilities.
- Prioritize maintenance issues in the firehouses.
- Utilize other city resources to assist in the maintenance and operation of fire department activities.

Objective 2: Enhance organizational operations through technology

Timeline: 3 years

Critical Tasks:

- Refine and optimize the use E.T.I.N. with more relevant material.
 - Create a video unit for training production.
 - Develop in-house training videos for E.T.I.N.
- Upgrade radio system with multi-agency operability.
- Create a technology needs list for each firehouse.

Objective 3: Investigate ways to increase funding

Timeline: 3 years

Critical Tasks:

- Create a new position with job duties that include locating, writing, and securing grants.
- Assess the feasibility of EMS transport.
- Investigate revenue generation through providing services to other departments and industry outreach.
- Investigate the possible consolidation of services.
- Market the academy as a regional training facility.

Appendix A: Organizational survey of strengths, weaknesses and challenges

Instructions: Please provide your responses to the questions below.

Return to: City of Rochester Fire Department
185 Exchange Blvd., Suite 665
Rochester, NY 14614

1. What do you see as the Rochester Fire Department's greatest strengths?

2. What do you see as the challenges the Rochester Fire Department is currently facing?

3. What challenges do you see the Rochester Fire Department facing over the next few years?

4. What do you see as the greatest weaknesses of the Rochester Fire Department?

5. What do you see as the greatest opportunities the Rochester Fire Department faces over the next few years?

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CITY OF ROCHESTER

Fire Department
185 Exchange Blvd.
Suite 665
Rochester, NY 14614
585.428.6739
www.cityofrochester.gov